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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/661,705	09/14/2000	Thomas J. Nelson	068368.0131	8997

25312 7590 10/10/2003

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ARLINGTON, VA 22202

EXAMINER

DORSEY, DENNIS

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3637

DATE MAILED: 10/10/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/661,705

Applicant(s)

NELSON, THOMAS J.

Examiner

Dennis L Dorsey

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 July 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2,9,11-18,21 and 26-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2,9,11-18,21 and 26-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 20 June 2002 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 31,37.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on April 2, 2003 and July 7, 2003 is acknowledged and has been considered by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 2, 9, 11-18, 21, and 26-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pajala Patent Number 4,796,402 in view of Toshio Patent Number 4,169,688.

Pajala '402 teaches all the limitations of the above claims except the panels with identical profiles on all edges, outwardly tapering channel and the specific thickness ranges from about .240 inches to about .320 inches. Pajala '402 teaches a rectangular flooring panels (see Figure 1) with a substantially constant thickness, a top surface (1) longer than bottom surface (3) (see Figure 1), bottom surface (3) is coextensive with substrate at the ends, middle substrate (2) made of made of a wood or plastic (column 2, lines 1-5), height or thickness within range of 16-18 mm but can be considerably less depending on the given parameters (column 1, lines 45-55), a groove in middle substrate extending the length of the panel, and angled portions on the profiles. Toshio

'688 teaches a flooring panel (2) with identical profiles on all edges of the panel (see Figure 1) with receiving grooves (3) on all edges, channels (9) that are outwardly tapering (column 3, lines 24-26) running the length of the bottom surface, and both channels and grooves meeting traverse on adjacent edges. It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Pajala '402 reference as taught by the Toshio '688 to provide identical profiles with grooves, since it is held to be within the skill of a worker in the art to select panels edges with recesses and grooves or just recesses alone as a matter of obvious design choice. It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the panels in the thickness range of .240 inches to about .320 inches, since it is held to be within the skill of a worker in the art to vary the thickness of the panels as a matter of obvious design choice requiring only routine skill.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2, 9, 11-18, 21, and 26-28 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dennis L Dorsey whose telephone number is 703-306-9137. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:30 pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on 703-308-2486. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1020.

DLD 

LANNA MAI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

